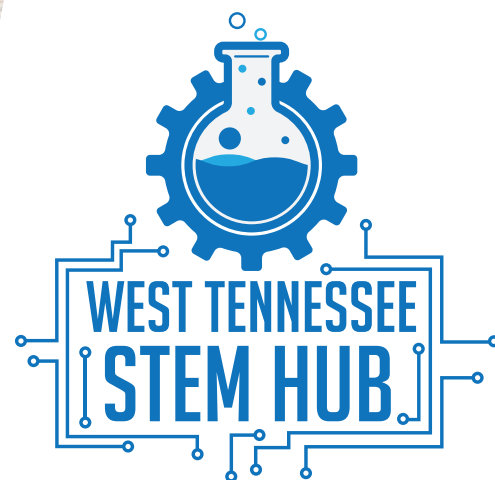


# **WEST TN STEM HUB STEM AMBASSADOR 2025 HANDBOOK 2026**

—— [www.westtnstem.org](http://www.westtnstem.org) ——





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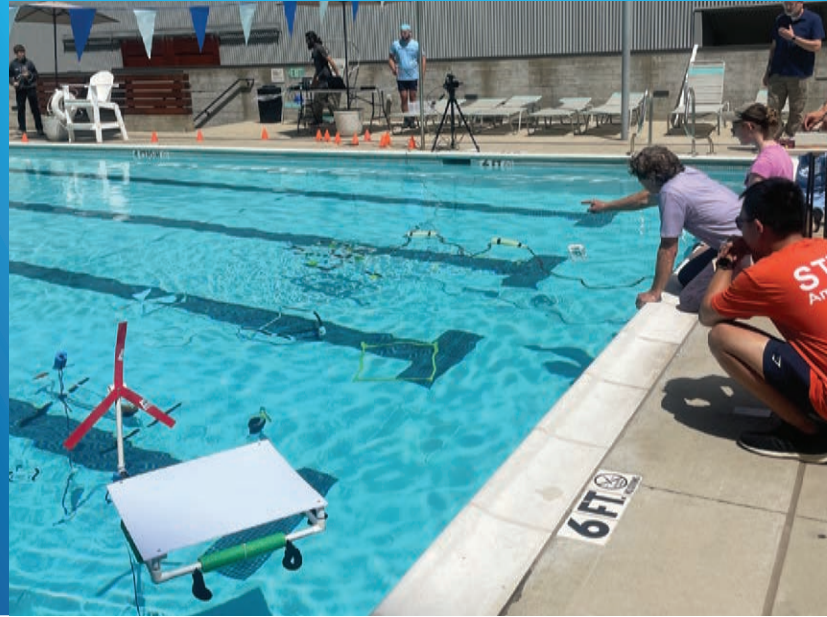
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Welcome to the West TN STEM Hub's STEM Ambassador program! This handbook contains information critical to your job detail. It is very important for you to read this document carefully and be sure to clarify with STEM Hub staff if you do not understand. Please save this handbook for future reference. An up-to-date copy of the handbook will remain in the STEM Hub Basecamp site at all times. Selection for the STEM Ambassador program is competitive.

Your participation in this program means that you are an excellent STEM student, a role model, and a representative of your department, the U of M, your state, federal, or corporate sponsor, and the West TN STEM Hub!



## Vision

To unite K-12, institutes of higher education and STEM industry partners in an unprecedented approach that transforms STEM education and workforce opportunities throughout West Tennessee.

## Mission

The West TN STEM Hub (the Hub) serves as a resource for West Tennessee to increase students' interest in and preparedness for the STEM workforce. The Hub takes a multi-pronged approach to engaging target audiences through a variety of activities including providing materials for individual exploration, in-classroom and out of classroom learning opportunities, teacher training, and creating conversations between K-12, higher education, and industry around STEM education. Collaborative partnerships between the Hub and STEM community professionals are the cornerstone of this work. The Hub is led by the University of Memphis Herff College of Engineering with partnership from the College of Education and the College of Arts

## Website

The West TN STEM Hub provides numerous resources including lesson plans, STEM Spotlights, a calendar of STEM events, access to online course modules, information about STEM Challenges and the STEM Essay Competition, annual Innovations in STEM conference, and much more.

The website is located at <http://www.westtnstem.org>.

## Lending Library

The Hub hosts two STEM Lending Libraries - one at the UofM main campus and the other at our Lambuth campus. The Libraries lend free resources to area teachers. Read more about the Lending Library here: <https://westtnstemhub.org/stem-lending-library>

As a representative of the West TN STEM Hub we ask that you be able to promote the products that are available FREE of charge to teachers! Ambassadors assigned to the Lending Library will be responsible for monitoring inventory, logging data from each teacher/borrower, and helping teachers carry the products to their car.

Be sure to become familiar with the inventory and supporting lesson plans so that you may best assist K-12 teachers.

### LENDING LIBRARY LOCATIONS

#### THE MAIN CAMPUS

Edwards Research & Innovation Center  
(ERIC 220).

#### THE LAMBUTH CAMPUS

Varnell Jones building  
(VJ 207D).

Be sure to also create a FREE library account here:

<https://westtnstemlibrary.myturn.com/library/>

so that you may check out materials to use in your assignments.



## What is the STEM Ambassador Program?

The STEM Ambassador program is designed to provide on-site support for teachers, community agencies, or companies that wish to engage K-12 students in meaningful STEM learning activities. The STEM Ambassadors are undergraduate STEM majors who not only make a positive impact with area students through providing tutoring, STEM competition coaching, and other support, but also learn essential professionalism, communication, and leadership skills through a formal training program.

## What Do We Do?

Our STEM Ambassadors support the mission of the West TN STEM Hub through assistance with the following initiatives:

- Regular and On-Call STEM Ambassador Assignments
- STEM Lending Library
- STEM Competitions
- Innovations in K-12 STEM Conference (Memphis and Jackson)
- West TN STEM Hub web, newsletter, and social media resources

## Who Do We Represent?

As an employee of the West TN STEM Hub, you are an extension of our program and each and every time you are working, keep in mind you are representing:

- West TN STEM Hub
- Our sponsors
- University of Memphis
- Herff College of Engineering
- Your STEM departments
- Tennessee STEM Innovation Network (TSIN)

## Who Do We Serve?

We serve a variety of K-12 partners through our work, with the ultimate goal of increasing West TN students' interest in and preparation for STEM careers. We work with all districts in Shelby County, rural school districts in southwestern TN, Charter Schools, private and parochial schools, and community organizations serving youth.

## How are Our Programs Sustained?

Our programs are sustained through a variety of sponsors, including:

- Corporate sponsors
- Education Foundations
- Federal Work Study (FWS)
- Other state and federal grant activity
- TSIN

## What Does that Require?

In order to sustain this program, we must:

- COLLECT DATA!
- Demonstrate evidence of success
- ENSURE POSITIVE PERCEPTIONS OF OUR STAFF IN ALL SETTINGS

## What Does This Mean for You?

As a STEM Ambassador, you are responsible for ensuring you represent the following key qualities:

- Professionalism
- Engagement
- Responsibility, accountability and self-motivation
- The Hub's mission and ideals



# CHANGES IN POLICY

The West TN STEM Hub reserves the right to change this handbook's content, at any time and at our sole discretion. Its provisions may not be altered by any other means, oral or written. You will receive written notice of any changes made to the ambassador handbook, and you will be responsible for understanding and complying with all up-to-date policies.

*If you are confused about any information defined herein, please contact Dr. Stephanie Ivey or Mrs. Lavitta Means.*

All new Ambassadors are required to complete and submit the following forms. Starred (\*) forms can be found at the end of this manual.

Acknowledgement of Receipt of Ambassador Handbook\*

Signed Student Employment eContract

- Direct Deposit Authorization Form  
[www.memphis.edu/bf/forms/index.php#payroll](http://www.memphis.edu/bf/forms/index.php#payroll)
- W-4 Employee Withholding Allowance Form  
[www.memphis.edu/bf/forms/index.php#payroll](http://www.memphis.edu/bf/forms/index.php#payroll)
- I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification  
*Must be completed with HR*

For more information about student employment please click here:

[memphis.edu/studentemployment/](http://memphis.edu/studentemployment/)

At the time of hire, each new ambassador is required to complete the forms mentioned above and submit documents establishing identity and eligibility within the next three business days. Re-hired Ambassadors may only need to fill out a payroll action form.



## PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize you - the STEM Ambassador - with the policies, rules and other key aspects of the West TN STEM Hub. The information in this handbook supersedes all rules and policies that may previously have been expressed or implied, in both written and oral format. Compliance with this handbook is compulsory for all Ambassadors. The STEM Hub reserves the right to interpret this handbook's content as it sees fit, and to deviate from policy when it deems necessary.



# TYPES OF ASSIGNMENTS

West TN STEM Hub typically employs between 20-40 Ambassadors on a part-time basis. This section distinguishes between the different types of assignments for the West TN Stem Hub. Employee status is established at the time of hire and may only be altered via explicit approval of Dr. Stephanie Ivey or Mrs. Lavitta Means.

## Regular Assignments

Regular assignments are with a specific school or community organization on an ongoing basis. You will have a regular weekly schedule with these assignments.

**Ambassadors MUST attend all scheduled assignments for their school.**

Failure to do so can result in removal from the STEM Ambassador program. To be exempt, you must submit to Dr. Ivey and Mrs. Means a written excuse detailing why you will not be present and must give at least two days notice so that STEM Hub staff can try to identify a replacement for your shift. We are responsible for upholding the financial commitment made by the school or private donor for STEM Ambassador support.

*\*\*The Lending Library is considered a Regular assignment.*

## On-Call Assignments

On-call assignments are created for events happening on an "as-needed" basis. Events will be posted to the STEM Hub's Basecamp profile, and Ambassadors will have the option to take on temporary assignments. Students will be selected to work an event on a first-come, first-served basis. If you can no longer work an on-call event that you volunteered for, you must notify 'the graduate student coordinator' a week in advance.

## Volunteer Assignments

As part of our mission to support and provide services, each Ambassador will be required to complete 5 volunteer hours per semester. These hours will be logged via an online document (*the link will be posted to Basecamp each semester*). This will be a way for each Ambassador to give back and invest in the impact and growth of STEM education and workforce opportunities throughout West Tennessee. These hours can be fulfilled via regular assignments, special events, trainings, or on-call assignments.

## Preparation of Assignments

Each Ambassador will be allotted prep time for any scheduled assignments and/or events where they will be leading an activity and will be required to prepare in advance. Ambassadors must receive advance approval for prep time exceeding 30 minutes, which will be evaluated by assignment. If an Ambassador requires more than 30 minutes of prep time, a written request must be submitted and approved by Dr. Ivey or Mrs. Lavitta Means prior to the assignment or event.

# VIRTUAL EVENTS

If an ambassador is asked to host and/or attend a virtual event, The ambassador shall download a West TN STEM Hub background from Basecamp here:

**Docs & Files > Miscellaneous > Virtual Backgrounds**

Ambassadors should also wear their STEM Ambassador shirts in virtual events just as they would in an in-person setting. It is imperative that we present a professional appearance in all settings. Webcams are **REQUIRED** for ambassadors and should be on the whole time you are working the virtual event. We cannot force other attendees to turn on their webcams, but we can recommend that they do so. Virtual events should not be recorded and no pictures should be taken during the event, unless approved prior to the event. Cellphones should not be visible and not be operated during the event. Ambassadors shall remain professional during the event and provide their full attention, (*i.e. do not walk away from the meeting at any time*).



# PAYROLL POLICIES

## Reporting Times

Ambassadors are required to report their worked hours through the MyMemphis portal. Once logged into this/her account, select the Employee tab, and on the right-hand side (under Time Reporting, select "Click here to access your time sheet bi-weekly") to enter hours worked. Please select the correct reporting period/date range. Time should be recorded daily, if work is performed. Generally, a timesheet reminder will be sent via Basecamp; however,

**Ambassadors are responsible for reporting their time by the deadline established by STEM Hub staff regardless of whether a reminder is sent.**

To best comply with this requirement, we ask that you set a personal reminder/alarm according to the payroll schedule located at <https://www.memphis.edu/payroll/schedules.php>. In some cases, holidays and/or inclement weather often require time submission well in advance of the typical deadline. The Ambassadors will be notified of any changes to regular submission dates and must comply with adjusted schedules.

## ALL AMBASSADORS ARE REQUIRED TO WORK A MINIMUM OF ONE REGULAR ASSIGNMENTS PER SEMESTER.

\*\*\*\* If you have more than one job assignment, please select the correct position number associated with assignment and the hours performed\*\*\*

\*\*\***Very Important:** If you do not work during a pay period, you must still enter a '0' on any single day of the timesheet: **Click Save, Preview, and then Click 'SUBMIT'.**

## Impact Log

Ambassadors must also report duties performed through Google docs. Biweekly impact statements are due on the day before time sheets are due. These impact statements must include the event worked, hours worked, picture from event, lending library use, and number of students/teachers impacted. Your submitted time sheet will not be approved unless you have included details on the Google doc. This must be done for both regular and on call assignments. It is still necessary to add your name to the Google doc for that time period and enter a '0'.

## Payroll Schedule

As an Ambassadors, you are scheduled to be paid on a biweekly basis. Adjustments to pay dates may occur due to holidays. The payroll schedule can be located at : <https://www.memphis.edu/payroll/schedules.php>.

## Wages

Wages vary from employee to employee and are based on level of skill, experience, and performance in the program. The West TN STEM Hub conducts regular evaluations of all Ambassadors.



# CODE OF CONDUCT

## Reporting for Work

Ambassadors are expected to begin and end each shift at the assigned time and day of their regular or on-call assignments. Ambassadors must inform Dr. Ivey, Mrs. Means, and the graduate coordinator in advance if they will be absent or late and obtain his permission to leave early. Absences and late arrivals will be recorded. Should your absences or tardiness exceed a reasonable limit, you will be subject to disciplinary action and possible termination. Failing to inform the Hub Leaders or report to work for consecutive workdays will be considered voluntary resignation and result in removal from payroll.

## Dress Code Policy

Ambassadors are expected to dress in smart casual attire unless the day's tasks require otherwise. Each Ambassador will wear a STEM Ambassador shirt (provided by staff) to assignments. Clothing with offensive or inappropriate designs or stamps are not allowed.

## Confidentiality

No previous or current employee may disclose or give access to confidential STEM Hub, student, or teacher information, in any way or at any time, unless otherwise authorized by Dr. Ivey or Mrs. Means. This includes personal information, videos, and pictures of students and faculty.

## Cell Phone Policy

Cell phones brought to work must be on silent or vibrate mode to avoid disrupting coworkers, students, and teachers.

## Mandatory Meeting Attendance

Attend the monthly MANDATORY training meetings held via Teams or in person. Please note that there is a strict enforcement policy for this requirement. If for any reason you are unable to attend one of these meetings, you must notify Dr. Ivey and Mrs. Means at least one week prior to the meeting.

**We will strictly enforce the following:**

- Unexcused absences result in immediate probation status
- Strict '3 strikes and you're out!' policy

## Semester STEM Ambassador Evaluation

Each STEM Ambassador must meet with Mrs. Lavitta Means once a semester for thirty minutes. Mrs. Means will reach out to you to schedule your appointment.

## Health Policy

If you are experiencing symptoms of contagious illness, such as a fever, please seek medical attention and do not report to your assignment. Please report your need to be absent from the assignment to Dr. Ivey, Mrs. Means, and the graduate coordinator as soon as possible so that we may identify another Ambassador to serve in your place.

# ADDITIONAL POLICIES, REQUIREMENTS, AND SYSTEMS

## Auto Training

“Whether driving a state-owned, rental, or personal automobile on University business, if you are involved in an auto accident with a member of the general public or a vehicle not owned by an agency of the State of Tennessee, the accident must be reported to State of Tennessee Auto Accident Call Center. Please review and familiarize yourself with the University of Memphis Reporting Automobile Accidents page here: <https://www.memphis.edu/vehicles/#>

Once your payroll forms are submitted and approved, you must complete the online training here: [https:// memphis.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_6upjcC1gPIAPS8B](https://memphis.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6upjcC1gPIAPS8B)

## Minors Training

Because you are working with students under the age of 18, please review and complete the University of Memphis requirements for working with minors. Once your payroll forms are submitted and approved, you must complete the online training here: <https://bf.memphis.edu/training/>. After clicking the link, login with your Memphis credentials, click class schedule/registration, then select general, scroll down to the Learning & Development section and click 'Learning Curve'.

In addition, please review the following information which contains Minors on Campus Guidelines and the state law reporting requirements. You will be asked to complete an acknowledgement of this information. This form can be found at the end of this handbook.

# WORKING WITH MINORS

## Information for Those Participating in University- Run or Affiliated Programs or Activities Involving Minors

The University of Memphis community has a strong interest in how our society cares for children and the most vulnerable among us and wants to do what it can to prevent the victimization of child and adolescent minors and promote their safety.

The STEM Hub upholds all policies and requirements for working with minors. As a STEM Ambassador, you are responsible for reviewing and complying with all policies and guidelines established by the UofM. Please review both the Minors on Campus Guidelines and the Minors on Campus Policy.



## Guidelines

<https://www.memphis.edu/universityschools/pdfs/mocguidelines.pdf>

## Policy

<https://www.memphis.edu/universityschools/pdfs/participationofminorsoncampuspolicy.pdf>

# BACKGROUND CHECK PROCESS

All Ambassadors must pass a background check with the school(s)/ organizations to which they are assigned. Information regarding the screening process to work with Memphis Shelby County Schools will be sent to each Ambassador by Mrs. Means.

If you work with other school districts or community organizations, you will be informed of additional screening requirements to complete so that you are cleared to begin work. Because of the importance of screening prior to working with children and the responsibility that each organization must assume for allowing outside staff to work with their students, an Ambassador will likely undergo multiple background checks/clearance procedures. The STEM Hub will reimburse Ambassadors for any background checks that they are required to pay for with agencies with whom the STEM Hub serves. Ambassadors should save any relevant receipts and submit these to Dr. Ivey and Mrs. Means within one week of incurring such an expense.

**\*\*Very important- Ambassadors may not begin work until they are notified by STEM Hub leadership that they have been cleared through the relevant screening processes.**

## Travel

In the case of a long-distance event, it will be required that Ambassadors seek approval from Dr. Ivey/Mrs. Means and fill out mileage forms to ensure they are reimbursed for their travel. These forms must be approved BEFORE the date of the event, and failure to complete forms will result in NO compensation for travel.

**Ambassadors may not include travel time for regular assignments unless otherwise instructed by Dr. Ivey or Mrs. Means.**



## GPA Requirement

To remain in good standing with the program, Ambassadors must maintain a 2.75 GPA. Failure to do so will result in one semester of probation during which the student can participate only in on-call assignments so that they have the opportunity to devote more time to success in their coursework.

## STEM Hub Basecamp

Basecamp is the primary communication tool for ambassadors. The Ambassador leadership team will post about upcoming on-call events or important reminders. If you are interested in working an on-call event, then you must comment on that Basecamp thread stating your interest. You will later be emailed specific details about the event and what the expectations are for the ambassadors.

**Create your free account here:**  
<https://basecamp.com>

## OUR BASECAMP SITE

- Contains resources, including this Handbook and all other Ambassador materials
- Is the primary communication system for our program, including 'on-call' and meeting reminders, etc.
- Includes a calendar for upcoming events
- Is where you will upload pictures: at least 2 per month



# RETENTION POLICY

To remain in good standing with the Ambassador program, all students must comply with STEM Hub policies and must conduct themselves in a manner that represents our university, college, and the STEM Hub well. Any of the following may result in disciplinary action:

- **Excessive lateness and/or absence from regular or on-call assignments (3 strikes policy)**
- **Improper or indecent conduct**
- **Poor communication**
- **Uncooperative attitude**
- **Lack of respect for STEM Hub staff, teachers, staff, or students of organizations we serve, or fellow Ambassadors**
- **Abuse or unauthorized use of STEM Hub property**
- **Violation of any requirement or policy listed in this handbook**
- **Other negative or illegal behaviors**

Disciplinary action may consist of anything from verbal/written warnings and counseling to suspension or termination. Please review and internalize the list of “Don’ts” above, and make an effort to use good judgment at all time. Late or unexcused absences from regular or on-call activities will also follow a ‘3 strikes’ policy. After the third violation, the Ambassador may be dismissed from the program.

## AMBASSADOR BEST PRACTICE (AS SHARED BY YOUR PEERS)



### Working with Teachers/Staff

- Communicate with your teachers about what their expectations of you are for the classroom. Are you assisting with lessons, or creating them?
- **Be confident** in your knowledge and skill set, but do not be afraid to ask the teachers for help.
- If the teacher doesn't assign you something to do, instead of sitting and staring, be proactive and go talk with the students. Even if they're older and don't need your help, just ask them how their projects are going and put in your opinion!
- Invest in your relationships not only with the students and your teacher(s) but ALL staff and students in the school, , but also ALL staff and students in the school. It makes going to “work” feel more enjoyable, and it's just fun to celebrate others. **You never know what your interactions/relationships will lead to in their lives or yours, so make every connection count!**

# AMBASSADOR BEST PRACTICE (AS SHARED BY YOUR PEERS)

## Interacting with Students

- Be sure to introduce yourself. When you introduce yourself, tell them why you are there and also what you are studying. This might spark their interest and make a better connection.
- Be a liaison between the students and the teacher. A STEM ambassador can relay topics from the teachers to the students and vice versa, and can make communication more effective.
- Look for things that the students are familiar with and try to relate it to the lecture or what you are trying to teach them. Take initiative in helping them. Make it interesting!
- Notice when students are not participating as much as their peers, and find ways to specifically engage them—sometimes just talking to a student can get them out of their shell and make them more comfortable engaging in the activity.
- Be as good at listening as you are at talking. When working with a student, pay attention to the things that make new concepts click for that student. When explaining a concept, break things down into terms that are understandable by the student while being encouraging, not condescending; there is a fine line there.
- When you don't know the solution to a problem, let the kids see that. Vocalize your thought process so that they can see problem solving techniques in action.
- If you are in a class where the kids are younger, like Pre-K through 3rd grade, when you talk to them make sure to get down to their level. It is less intimidating when you are not towering over them while trying to help them.



## Planning Lessons and Activities

- If you're having trouble finding an activity or project to do with children, ask them what they want to do or what their interests are. Not only do you do something that they like, but you will likely have better class participation as a result.
- If faced with behavioral/disciplinary problems, use your activities as incentive-- more complex activities (cubelets, mindstorms) can only be brought to well behaved classes, so telling this to the students from the start can keep them focused and motivated. **Remember, your job is not to discipline the students, so if issues persist, let the teacher handle it.**
- Take note of what resources teachers have in their classrooms and do research on them! Oftentimes, teachers will have cool things that never get used because they haven't had time to learn how to use them. Acquiring the skills to use their resources will make lesson planning much easier and you more well-rounded!
- If you are stuck on a lesson plan and can't find anything that fits your needs on the STEM Hub website, ask other ambassadors about anything that has worked well for them. If you are looking for a more specific idea, Pinterest is a great website to consult!

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MINORS ON CAMPUS STATEMENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (name), certify that I have read and understand the University of Memphis's policies regarding minors on campus. I have also reviewed and affirm receipt of the Guidelines for Working with Minors and the Power Point presentation training on Minors on Campus. I agree to comply with University policy and all of the guidelines with which I have been presented including the duty to report child abuse. I understand that under Tennessee law I must report any suspected child abuse and that failure to report suspected child abuse to the authorities is against the law. I understand that as a person who interacts with minors under the auspices of UoM, I may be required to undergo a criminal history background check with results acceptable to UoM. I certify that I have never been convicted of a crime related to the abuse or neglect of minors or entered a guilty plea or other plea associated with a crime related to the abuse or neglect of minors.

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Program/Activity \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF AMBASSADOR HANDBOOK

Employee:

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the West TN Stem Hub Ambassador Handbook, which contains vital information on the policies, procedures and benefits associated with the position of STEM Ambassador.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that part of my assignment will be to complete 5 volunteer hours per semester as a STEM Ambassador

I have read and agree to abide by all policies and procedures contained therein.

Employee Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Dr. Stephanie Ivey \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

